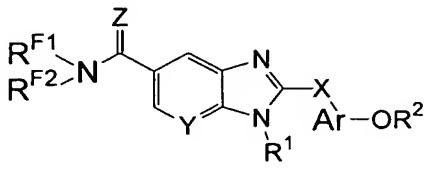
Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (original) A compound of formula (I) or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof:



(I)

wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently electron-withdrawing groups;

Z is selected from O= and S=;

R^1 is selected from C_{1-10} alkyl; C_{1-10}alkyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; C_{2-10}alkenyl; C_{2-10}alkenyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; C_{2-10}alkynyl; C_{2-10}alkynyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; R^3R^4N-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NC(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; R^3O-C_{1-6} alkyl; $R^3OC(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3C(=O)NR^3$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NSO_2$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3CSO_2N(R^4)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NC(=O)N(R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NSO_2N(R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; and C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, substituted C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, substituted C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, substituted C_{2-6}alkynyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, substituted C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, and C_{5-6}heteroaryl, and substituted C_{5-6}heteroaryl;

R^3, R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from -H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent C_{1-6}group forms a portion of a ring;

X is a C_{1-10} divalent group that separates groups connected thereto by one or two atoms;

Ar is a C_{4-12} divalent aromatic group; and

Y is selected from –CH= and –N=.

Claim 2. (original) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently C_{1-6}alkyl substituted by one or more groups selected from -F, -Cl, -Br, -NO_2, -CN, -OH, -CHO, -C(=O)-R' and -OR', wherein R' is a C_{1-3}alkyl.

Claim 3. (original) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently selected from -CF_3, -CH_2CF_3, -CH_2CHF_2, -$CHFCF_3$, -$CHFCHF_2$, -$CHFCH_2F$, -CF_2CF_3, -CF_2CH_3, -CF_2CH_2F, -CF_2CHF_2, -CF_3, -CH_2CCl_3, -CH_2CHCl_2, -CH_2CBr_3, -CH_2CHBr_2, -CH_2NO_2, -$CH_2CH_2NO_2$, -CH_2CN, -CH_2CH_2CN, and -$CH_2CH_2OCH_3$.

Claim 4. (original) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently C_{1-6} groups that comprise at least 30% fluorine by weight and Z is O=.

Claim 5. (original) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein R^1 is selected from C_{1-10} alkyl; C_{1-10}alkyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; C_{2-10}alkenyl; C_{2-10}alkenyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; C_{2-10}alkynyl; C_{2-10}alkynyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; R^3R^4N-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NC(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; R^3O-C_{1-6} alkyl; $R^3OC(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3C(=O)NR^3$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NSO_2$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3CSO_2N(R^4)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NC(=O)N(R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NSO_2N(R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; aryl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted aryl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl; and C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{1-6}alkyl substituted by at least one fluorine, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl substituted by at least one fluorine, C_{2-6}alkynyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl substituted by at least one fluorine, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, substituted C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, and C_{5-6}heteroaryl, and substituted C_{5-6}heteroaryl;

R^3, R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from -H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent C_{1-6}group forms a portion of a ring; and

X is selected from $-NR^6-$, -C(=O)-, $-CH_2-CH_2-$, -CH=CH-, -O-, $-C(R^6)(R^7)-$, and $-S(O)_n-$, wherein n is 0, 1 or 2, wherein R^6 and R^7 are independently C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, C_{1-6}alkoxy, -OH, or -H.

Claim 6. (original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein:

R^1 is selected from C_{1-8}alkyl; C_{2-8}alkenyl; C_{2-8} alkynyl; aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl with the aryl substituted by at least one group selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, acetoxymethyl, nitro and halogen; $R^8R^9NC_{1-6}$alkyl; R^8OC_{1-6}alkyl; cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl with the heterocylcoalkyl thereof substituted by at least one group selected from C_{1-8}alkyl, acetoxymethyl, nitro and halogen; C_{1-6}alkylaryl; C_{1-6}alkyl-C(=O)-; C_{6-8}aryl-C(=O)-; C_{4-8}heteroaryl-C(=O)-; heteroaryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; heteroaryl-C_{1-6}alkyl with the heteroaryl thereof substituted by at least one group selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, acetoxymethyl, nitro and halogen; and R^NC_{1-6}alkyl;

R^2 is selected from $-CH_3$, $-CH_2CH_3$, $-CH(CH_3)_2$, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, $-CH_2CF_3$, $-CHF_2$, $-CF_3$ and aryl;

R^N is an oxidized pyridyl wherein the nitrogen atom on the pyridyl ring is in an oxidized state (N^+-O^-);

Ar is selected from an arylene; an heteroarylene; an arylene substituted by at least one group selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogen, trifluoromethyl, cyano, nitro, hydroxy and C_{1-6}alkoxy; and an heteroarylene substituted by at least one group selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogen, trifluoromethyl, cyano, nitro, hydroxy and C_{1-6}alkoxy; and

R^8 and R^9 are independently selected from -H and C_{1-6}alkyl.

Claim 7. (original) The compound according to claim 6,

wherein the arylene is *para*-arylene; and the heteroarylene is selected from six-membered ring *para*-heteroarylene and five-membered ring *meta*-heteroarylene.

Claim 8. (original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein:

R^1 is selected from ethyl, propyl, allyl, isopentyl, benzyl, dimethylaminoethyl, 4-pyridylmethyl, 2-pyridylmethyl, 1-pyrrolylethyl, cyclopropylmethyl, cyclobutylmethyl, cyclopentylmethyl, cyclohexylmethyl, 2-pyrrolidylmethyl, 3-pyrrolidylmethyl, N-methyl-2-pyrrolidylmethyl, N-methyl-3-pyrrolidylmethyl, 2-piperidylmethyl, 3-piperidylmethyl, 4-piperidylmethyl, N-methyl-2-piperidylmethyl, N-methyl-3-piperidylmethyl, N-methyl-4-piperidylmethyl, 3-thienylmethyl, 2-tetrahydrofuranylmethyl, 3-tetrahydrofuranylmethyl, 2-tetrahydropyranylmethyl, 3-tetrahydropyranylmethyl, 4-tetrahydropyranylmethyl, (2-nitrothiophene-5-yl)methyl, (1-methyl-1H-imidazole-2-yl)methyl, (5-(acetoxymethyl)-2-furanyl)methyl, (2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole-1-yl)methyl, and 5-(2-methylthiazolyl);

R^2 is selected from $-CH_3$, $-CH_2CH_3$, $-CH(CH_3)_2$, $-CH_2CF_3$, CF_3, cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl and phenyl;

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are $-CH_2CF_3$ and Z is O=;

Ar is selected from a *para*-arylene; a *para*-arylene substituted with C_{1-6}alkyl, halogen, trifluoromethyl, cyano, nitro, hydroxy and C_{1-6}alkoxy; a six-membered ring *para*-heteroarylene; and a six-membered ring *para*-heteroarylene substituted with a group selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogen, trifluoromethyl, cyano, nitro, hydroxy and C_{1-6}alkoxy.

Claim 9. (original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein:

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are $-CH_2CF_3$, and Z is O=;

R^2 is $-CH_2CH_3$;

Ar is selected from *para*-phenylene and *para*-pyridylene; and

X is selected from $-CH_2-$ and $-CH(CH_3)-$.

Claim 10. (original) A compound according to claim 1, wherein said compound is selected from:

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-(3-methylbutyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

1-(Cyclopropylmethyl)-2-[(4-ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

1-(Cyclohexylmethyl)-2-[(4-ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-(2-furanylmethyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[(2*S*)-2-pyrrolidinylmethyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[(2*R*)-2-pyrrolidinylmethyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-(4-pyridinylmethyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[1-(4-Ethoxyphenyl)ethyl]-1-(4-pyridinylmethyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[(tetrahydro-2*H*-pyran-4-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[[(2*R*)-tetrahydro-2-furanyl]methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[[(2*S*)-tetrahydro-2-furanyl]methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[(tetrahydro-2*H*-pyran-2-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[(2R)-2-piperidinylmethyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxy-2-pyridyl)methyl]-1-[(tetrahydro-2*H*-pyran-4-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxy-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-1-(3-methylbutyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[[(2*R*)-1-methyl-2-pyrrolidinyl]methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(4-Ethoxyphenyl)methyl]-1-[[(2*R*)-1-methyl-2-piperidinyl]methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxy-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-1-[(2*R*)-2-pyrrolidinylmethyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[1-(4-Ethoxyphenyl)ethyl]-1-[(2*R*)-2-pyrrolidinylmethyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxy-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-1-[[(2*R*)-1-methyl-2-piperidinyl]methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxy-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-1-[[(2*R*)-1-methyl-2-pyrrolidinyl]methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

1-(Cyclobutylmethyl)-2-(4-ethoxybenzyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

1-(Cyclobutylmethyl)-2-[(5-ethoxypyridin-2-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

1-(Cyclopentylmethyl)-2-[(5-ethoxypyridin-2-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-(4-Ethoxybenzyl)-1-[(2*S*)-piperidin-2-ylmethyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxypyridin-2-yl)methyl]-1-(3-furylmethyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxypyridin-2-yl)methyl]-1-(3-thienylmethyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

1-(Cyclohexylmethyl)-2-[(5-ethoxypyridin-2-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

1-(Cyclohexylmethyl)-2-[(5-isopropoxypyridin-2-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-(4-Ethoxybenzyl)-1-[(4-methylmorpholin-3-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-[(5-Ethoxypyridin-2-yl)methyl]-1-[(4-methylmorpholin-3-yl)methyl]-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-(4-Ethoxybenzyl)-1-{[(2*S*)-1-methylpiperidin-2-yl]methyl}-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

2-(4-Isopropoxybenzyl)-1-{[(2*R*)-1-methylpiperidin-2-yl]methyl}-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide;

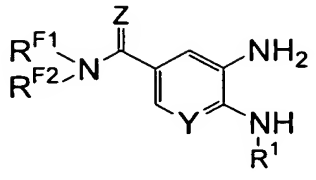
and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

Claims 11-14. (canceled)

Claim 15. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1~~–10~~ and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 16. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1~~–10~~.

Claim 17. (original) A method of producing a compound comprising the step of reacting a compound represented by formula (II) with $R^2OArXCOA$:



(II)

wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently electron-withdrawing groups;

Z is selected from O= and S=;

R^1 is selected from C_{1-10} alkyl; C_{1-10}alkyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; C_{2-10}alkenyl; C_{2-10}alkenyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; C_{2-10}alkynyl; C_{2-10}alkynyl substituted by at least one of halogen, cyano, acetoxymethyl and nitro; R^3R^4N-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NC(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; R^3O-C_{1-6} alkyl; $R^3OC(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3C(=O)NR^3$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NSO_2$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3CSO_2N(R^4)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NC(=O)N(R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; $R^3R^4NSO_2N(R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl; substituted heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl; and C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, substituted C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, substituted C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, substituted C_{2-6}alkynyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, substituted C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, and C_{5-6}heteroaryl, and substituted C_{5-6}heteroaryl;

R^3, R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from -H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent C_{1-6}group forms a portion of a ring;

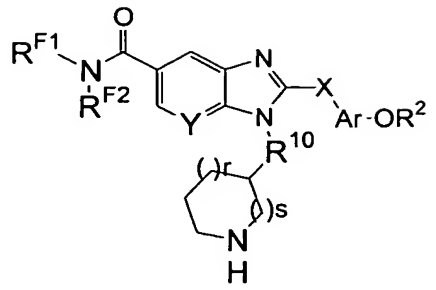
X is a C_{1-10}divalent group that separates groups connected thereto by one or two atoms;

A is selected from –OH, -Cl, -Br, and –I;

Ar is a C_{4-12} divalent aromatic group; and

Y is selected from –CH= and –N=.

Claim 18. (original) A method of producing a compound comprising the step of reacting a compound represented by formula (III) with formaldehyde:



(III)

wherein

r and s are selected from 0, 1 and 2;

R^{10} is selected from C_{1-6}alkylene, -O-, and $-NR^{11}$-, wherein R^{11} is a C_{1-6}alkyl;

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently electron-withdrawing groups;

X is a C_{1-10}divalent group that separates groups connected thereto by one or two atoms;

Ar is a C_{4-12}divalent aromatic group;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, substituted C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, substituted C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, substituted C_{2-6}alkynyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, substituted C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, aryl, substituted aryl, and C_{5-6}heteroaryl, and substituted C_{5-6}heteroaryl; and

Y is selected from –CH= and –N=.

Claim 19. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 8 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 20. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 9 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 21. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 10 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 22. (new) A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 8.

Claim 23. (new) A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 9.

Claim 24. (new) A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 10.